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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 001326

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/22/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [KPKO](#) [CG](#)
SUBJECT: SITREP 11: KINSHASA FIGHTING (8/22 1030 LOCAL TIME)

REF: KINSHASA 1325

Classified By: PolOff CBrown, reasons 1.4 b/d.

11. (C) The Ambassador called DCM at 0900 local time to report that the CIAT ambassadors will meet with President Kabila at his riverside residence at 1130 August 21.

12. (C) PolCouns called around 0900 to report that presidential diplomatic adviser Augustin Katumba is proposing a meeting of the Supreme Defense Council, along with the CIAT and MONUC military officials, to discuss steps at resolving the fighting. Katumba said the first step which must be taken is for both Bemba's forces and GSSP members to return to their respective barracks. The next step would be for Bemba to agree to have his force integrated into the Congolese military. PolCouns asked Katumba if that meant GSSP forces would also be required to integrate. Katumba said that idea would be considered. (Note: CIAT also called for military integration for all forces in a statement prepared the morning of August 21, after the initial violence on August 120. End note.)

13. (C) Minister of Interior Theophile Mbemba reported there had been a security problem near N'Djili airport between GSSP and MLC forces. According to Mbemba, MLC troops were trying to come in to town or the Masina neighborhood (located north of the airport on the way to downtown Kinshasa) for food. Mbemba said the MLC forces clashed with police in Masina, and reported that a couple of police stations had been set on fire in the area. The Interior Minister said the GSSP currently controls N'Djili airport and the road leading to the airport. Embassy contacts reported that GSSP forces have blocked the road beyond the airport (presumably to prevent MLC forces from going to or from a base located past the airport). Contacts at the Dutch embassy in Kinshasa reported through immigration officials that GSSP troops were in control of N'Djili airport.

14. (C) The Interior Minister told PolCouns police are starting to have problems with shegues (Congolese street gangs) around the city, and thought the problem would get worse throughout the day. Mbemba said his biggest concern was the shegues would create an atmosphere of general lawlessness with possible looting, and that police forces are stretched so thin they would not be able to maintain order.

15. (C) Mbemba reported as well that gunfire was heard around Makala prison in Kinshasa. Mbemba said he believed the fighting there was the result of MLC forces attempting to free about 30 colleagues there who had been arrested the day before.

16. (C) PolCouns spoke to National Assembly President (and MLC

member) Thomas Luhaka. Luhaka said he has not yet spoken to Bemba, but that he himself supports the idea of a withdrawal of forces and would urge Bemba to support a withdrawal as well. PolCouns also spoke to Minister of Foreign Affairs Raymond Ramazani (also an MLC member), who said the current situation must not be allowed to escalate.

17. (C) Sources contacted outside Kinshasa indicate the rest of the DRC is calm.

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